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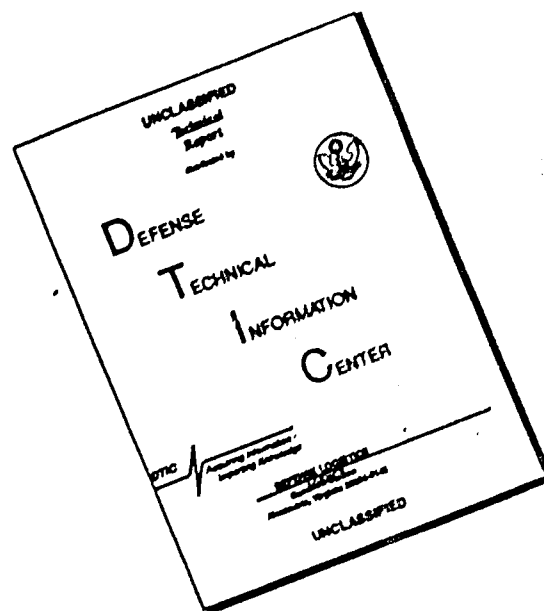
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HEADQUARTERS, 13TH COMBAT AVIATION (DELTA) BATTALION
APO San Francisco 96215

AVBA-DB

11 21 Nov 66

15 November 1966

SUBJECT: Operational Report on Lessons Learned Period Ending 31 October 1966 (RCS CSG PO-28 (RI))

6 Lessons Learned, Headquarters, 13th Combat Aviation (Delta) Battalion LUT. 8

TO: Assistant Chief of Staff
ATTN: ACSFOR, DA
Washington, D.C. 20310

AD393387

9 Operational rept. for quarterly period ending 31 Oct 66.

OCT 31 1966

SIGNIFICANT ORGANIZATION OR UNIT ACTIVITIES

a. ORGANIZATION: During the reporting period the 13th Combat Aviation Battalion included:

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(1) Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment with the 5th, 52nd, 3rd and 62nd Quartermaster Detachments and the 13th Security Platoon Attached.

(2) 336th Assault Helicopter Company (UH1) with the 167th Transportation Detachment (Aircraft Maintenance), 277th Signal Detachment (Avionics) and the 41st Medical Detachment attached.

(3) 121st Assault Helicopter Company (UH1) with the 80th Transportation Detachment (Aircraft Maintenance), 257th Signal Detachment (Avionics) 69th Infantry Detachment (Ground Surveillance Radar) and the 78th Artillery Detachment (Counter-mortar Radar) attached.

(4) 114th Assault Helicopter Company (UH1) with the 83rd Medical Detachment, 96th Signal Detachment (Avionics) and the 544th Transportation Detachment (Aircraft Maintenance) attached.

(5) 175th Assault Helicopter Company (UH1) with the 28th Signal Detachment (Avionics), 150th Transportation Detachment (Aircraft Maintenance) attached.

(6) 221st Reconnaissance Airplane Company (O1) with the 325th Signal Detachment (Avionics) attached.

b. SIGNIFICANT CHANGES: The first UH1B/540 armed aircraft came to the Delta in October. On 3 October the 114th Assault Helicopter Company (UH1) was assigned four, and received four more within a period of days to complete one of their two armed platoons. Pilot transition was conducted concurrently with installation of armament subsystems, and the platoon was operational in ten days. One of the biggest problems during the change over was the lack of

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wiring kits to wire the new aircraft to receive the M5 subsystem. The wiring had to be removed from the old UH1B aircraft and re-installed in the new aircraft. The UH1B/540 flew well at first, but after 25 flying hours showed symptoms of sleeve bearing failure in the rotor grips. On checking, the probable cause was found to be the carbon seals which were within tolerances, but on the loose side. The hubs were disassembled, cleaned, inspected and assembled with particular attention to seating the carbon seals as close as feasible. During the inspection, four of the hubs were found to be unserviceable after 25 to 30 flying hours. One by one during the month of October, five more UH1B/540 aircraft were assigned and a section of the other armed platoon is now operational.

On 1 September 1966, the 336th Assault Helicopter Company (UH1) was activated by General Order 210, Headquarters, USARPAC to replace Company A, 101st Aviation Battalion, which was reassigned back to its parent unit, 101st Airborne Division, Fort Campbell, Kentucky. The attached units remained unchanged. The same general order activated the 175th Assault Helicopter Company (UH1) to replace Company A, 502nd Aviation Battalion. Company A was transferred to Headquarters, Department of the Army control. Again attachments remained unchanged.

Difficulties in transporting supplies and equipment into and within IV Corps area have been somewhat relieved by attachment of a light truck section of 120th Truck Company to this Battalion. Acquisition of the truck section has both increased the transport capability and relieved the battalion of the necessity to use tactical helicopters for administrative supply flights. It is anticipated that the situation will be further improved by acquisition of an additional truck section in November. Further useful expansion of this activity will probably be limited however, by the lack of secure roads.

Prior to this reporting period, refueling at 12 pre-stocked stage fields was accomplished from 55 gallon drums and 50 gallon per minute pumps loaded on 2½ ton trucks. The system was unsatisfactorily slow and wasteful of manpower in operations consuming as much as 30,000 gallons of JP-4 fuel per day. During the reporting period the battalion commenced a modernization program to install bulk fuel storage (3000, 5000 and 10,000 gallon bags) and miniports or similar multi-nozzle refueling systems at all stage fields. In addition to correcting the cited deficiencies, the new systems permit better support of tactical operations (due to reduced breaks in air assaults for refueling) and more efficient bulk fuel deliveries to the stage fields. The modernization program is about 75% completed and presently held up for want of transportation to move components located at Qui Nhon.

c. OPERATIONAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE AVIATION SUPPORT: The Delta Aviation Battalion assigned and attached units continued to provide operational and administrative support to the ARVN IV Corps, and other agencies operating in

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the IV Corps Tactical Zone. Operational and administrative support missions include command liaison, outpost resupply, medical evacuation, radio relay, escort and surveillance. Statistics generated in support of these missions are as follows:

| | <u>AUGUST</u> | <u>SEPTEMBER</u> | <u>OCTOBER</u> | <u>TOTAL</u> | <u>% INCREASE, DECREASE FR LAST PERIOD</u> |
|------------------|---------------|------------------|----------------|--------------|--|
| Hours flown | 14,403 | 13,929 | 15,213 | 43,545 | +5.5 |
| Sorties | 19,396 | 21,170 | 24,033 | 64,599 | +11.2 |
| Passengers moved | 37,183 | 56,676 | 56,523 | 150,382 | -.6 |
| Cargo tons moved | 6021 | 1777.8 | 1573.8 | 9553.8 | +39.2 |

d. TACTICAL AVIATION SUPPORT:

(1) Tactical support was rendered to ARVN IV Corps, its subordinate units, and Special Forces units operating in the IV Corps Tactical Zone as well as limited support to Field Forces Victor II and its subordinate units. Support during this period included airlanded assault missions, eagle flights, reconnaissance, surveillance, leaflet dissemination, armed escort, aeromedical evacuation, night armed surveillance, canal curfew enforcement (Firefly) and dispensation of riot control agents. Statistics generated in support of these missions are as follows:

| | <u>AUGUST</u> | <u>SEPTEMBER</u> | <u>OCTOBER</u> | <u>TOTAL</u> | <u>% INCREASE, DECREASE FROM LAST PERIOD</u> |
|---------------------|---------------|------------------|----------------|--------------|--|
| Heliborne Aslt Msns | 29 | 24 | 30 | 83 | +12.1 |
| Hours flown | 6837.3 | 6920.4 | 8141.4 | 21,899.1 | +76.3 |
| Sorties | 12,914 | 13,025 | 19,593 | 45,532 | +49.8 |
| Troops moved | 21,712 | 45,399 | 52,053 | 119,164 | +84.3 |

(2) While the above statistics have increased, aviator strength has decreased. This has resulted in an average monthly aviator flight time of 103.4 hours. No ill effects have been yet noted. All aviators are being monitored closely by the flight surgeons to detect symptoms of fatigue.

e. OPERATION DAN CHI 261: This was a search and destroy operation conducted by the 21st ARVN Infantry Division which was fought in six phases during the month of September. The operation resulted primarily from

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information obtained from a VC "open arms" returnee who revealed the locations of several VC supply points. This information provided the main objectives for the ground forces. A new technique was initiated during Phase II to enhance chances of surprise by shortening the pre-strike time. This technique is described in paragraph g following. A summary of Dan Chi 261 is enclosed as Annex A.

f. OPERATION DAN CHI 263 (SPECIAL OPERATION): This was a quick reaction operation that evolved when a small raiding party, on a classified mission, was landed in an LZ approximately 10 kilometers north of Vi Thanh. Immediately on landing, the raiding party encountered heavy contact with a well dug in VC force. A 21st Infantry Division contingent force was standing by at Vi Thanh and was quickly committed. Simultaneously, all battalion aircraft were recalled or scrambled to Vi Thanh to support this effort. In a short time a total of 72 aircraft were supporting this operation. Of significance was the large number of helicopters that received battle damage. The VC were well disciplined and accurate in the use of their weapons. They waited until the troop ships were on the ground in the LZ before opening fire from three sides with intense light automatic weapons fire. The heavier caliber AA weapons were used almost exclusively against the armed ships and AF aircraft. A summary of this operation is enclosed as Annex B.

g. TACTICS: During the reporting period VC in the IV Corps area declined to stand and fight ARVN ground forces unless forced to do so. Under these conditions, surprise is of primary importance in helicopterborne assaults. To enhance the chances for surprise, artillery and air preparations have occasionally been eliminated and no aircraft approach the operational area until time for the assault force to approach the LZ. When the force becomes airborne, it proceeds to a pre-selected release point and turns to its in-bound heading. Approximately two minutes before LZ time one armed platoon places continuous fire on suspected enemy positions bordering the LZ. A second platoon escorts the transports in and takes over the fire suppression mission when within range. Once the troops have been discharged, the transports depart the LZ escorted by the initial armed platoon that was delivering suppressive fire. The other armed platoon remains on station and supports the ground units. Transports then return to the stage field for succeeding lifts. This procedure has been quite effective in achieving surprise. It should not be employed however when strong enemy forces are likely to be encountered in the LZ.

During the reporting period and more specifically in September and October the upper Delta was completely inundated by flood waters of the Mekong River. Field water depths reached 10 feet in most places. In consequence VC local forces were forced to load arms and equipment from hiding places into sampans to wait out the flood. To exploit this condition, a combined force of helicopters, Navy patrol boats, and a small tactical ground force was organized. The helicopter force normally consisted of one command and control ship, one UH1D transport, and one heavy fire team. The armed

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ships were used to reconnoiter in front and to the flanks of the advancing patrol boats to force suspected VC sampans out into the open. In the case of suspect sampans the UH1D transport hovered overhead with ARVN soldiers aboard utilizing a long pole hook to strip decking and camouflage from the sampans. In instances where suspected VC were in or around the sampan, a rope ladder was dropped and the suspects directed to climb up into the transport. Based on information received from questioning, the suspects were either released or taken to a detention area. Whenever possible, each suspected VC sampan was investigated by one of the waterborne maneuver elements.

If it was impossible to get a surface element into the location of the sampans, they were then destroyed by armed ships. Some VC attempted to hide in the water in the vicinity of their sampans, breathing either through hollow reeds or hiding in the grass with only their noses above water. As the transport hovered over the area, the rotor blast would blow the high grass down and expose the heads or faces of the suspects. In some instances it became necessary to throw concussion grenades or fire M79 rounds into the water to force the VC to the surface. This combined heliborne, waterborne force proved to be highly successful in exploiting the flooded areas and is credited with virtually eliminating VC local forces in Kien Phong sector.

h. The Delta Aviation Battalion's spot intelligence reporting system has been increasing monthly in productive information, and it has resulted in numerous actions by IV Corps TOC. Since the test ended on 31 July 1966, more than 600 spot reports have been submitted to S2. As of 1 September 1966, the system was enlarged to incorporate the 156th Aviation Company, USAF fighters, Spooky and FAC aircraft. USAF Captain Scott Chandler, Intelligence Officer, Air Force Advisory Team #7, contributes daily reports to the Delta Battalion S2 as he receives them from the VNAF pilots. All Battalion units are now actively participating in the program.

The Delta Battalion S2 section is now providing intelligence annexes to most of the divisions' airmobile operations plans. These intelligence annexes are oriented toward the aviation support units and give the aviation mission commander not only a picture of the existing situation, but historical VC routes of movement, possible targets (bunkers, trench lines, etc), which landing zones will most probably be defended, and other information not normally included in the ground tactical plan.

i. VC ACTIVITY:

(1) Throughout the entire IV Corps Tactical Zone, Viet Cong activity decreased at a substantial rate until the last two weeks of October when it increased slightly. VC initiated attacks have seldom been larger than company size in strength. Reliance upon small arms harassments, an occasional mortar attack and continued subversion, espionage, sabotage and terrorist acts indicate that the VC are still regressing toward Phase II of the Delta insurgency.

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(2) During Dan Chi 263, Phase 3, (Special), Viet Cong tactics in a deliberately prepared defensive position were encountered. Anti-heliborne assault firing techniques were observed as were anti-aircraft firing techniques. Bunker construction by the Viet Cong was effective and provided adequate protection. Despite a high concentration of automatic weapons in the landing zone, comparatively few aircraft received serious hits. At the first opportunity, the Viet Cong broke contact.

The Viet Cong have not elected to mass any large unit for an attack, neither have they elected to become decisively engaged with ARVN regular units. When contact is achieved by ARVN, the Viet Cong attempt to immediately break contact and withdraw.

j. TRAINING: During the reporting period, training of VNAF helicopter pilots in the UH1D was the most significant activity. Delta Battalion was selected to train and utilize 6 VNAF helicopter pilots in two of its airmobile companies; the 175th at Vinh Long and the 121st at Soc Trang. The period was 4 August through 31 October 1966. The VNAF pilots had received their flight training at Fort Rucker, Alabama. Consequently, no problems were encountered with respect to language or methods of instruction. The pilots proved to be very adept in learning procedures and grasping tactics employed on airmobile operations. Transition training in the U.S. was completed in approximately 7 days. At the completion of training, they became operational and have flown combat assault, command liaison, medical evacuation and other missions which the battalion is called upon to perform. The program has proven very successful. Delta Battalion is slated to receive eight more pilots on 7 November for a two month period.

During the reporting period the Pathfinder Detachment, authorized by an augmentation to the battalion TO&E, was organized. The first two members arrived in September from the 1st Cav Div at An Khe. In October two Lieutenants authorized for the detachment arrived. One was a school trained Pathfinder while the other will undergo OJT. Three men from the battalion volunteered for the detachment giving us seven of twelve men authorized. The detachment is presently located at Vinh Long where the members are undergoing training in all phases of pathfinder operations. As the team reaches full TO&E strength and completes its training cycle, current plans call for locating half the detachment at Vinh Long and half at Soc Trang. This will allow immediate response in the way of pathfinder assistance to all airmobile companies.

SECTION II

COMMANDER'S OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

PART I OBSERVATIONS (LESSONS LEARNED)

ITEM: Granting tour extensions during the last three months of tour.

DISCUSSION: Present policy authorizes the approval of extensions on enlisted

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personnel up to the day of departure from the command. While this insures that all positions are filled, it creates the problem of finding suitable positions for replacement personnel who have been requisitioned prior to DEROS for E6 and below and 8 months prior to DEROS for E7 and higher grades. This problem becomes serious when it involves the top three enlisted grades. At present this problem exists in only a few MOS's. The approved liberal leave policy has become an added incentive for enlisted men to extend. If the trend of increased extensions continues, then the personnel problem will multiply.

Observations: A control system is needed to prevent replacements arriving in a unit to fill a vacancy that has been filled by an extended EMI.

ITEM: Armed helicopter support has been significantly reduced during the period due to transition from UH1B to UH1B(540) helicopters in two of the five main platoons.

Discussion: Two factors contributed to the loss of armed helicopter capability during the transition to the new 540's for this reporting period. First, armament and wiring had to be removed from the old helicopters and re-installed on the new. This time consuming procedure was necessary because armament systems were in short supply. Second, during the transition, the new ships which had been fitted with armament and put into service began encountering difficulty with rotor systems (teflon bearings) within 25 to 35 hours of flying time. Consequently, this Battalion was short one or one and one half gun platoons throughout the transition period. Further difficulty is expected in the near future when the XM21 systems arrive. Testing of the 540 prior to issue appears to have been quite inadequate.

Observation: The operational capability of units in combat would be substantially improved by receipt of equipment ready for use and by more thorough testing and necessary modification of major items of equipment prior to issue.

Item: Undue increase of administrative workload.

Discussion: With the build-up of units and the command and control structure in Vietnam, the administrative workload and house keeping functions associated with preparing reports, IG inspections, receiving visitors, and developing plans increases. All of these functions serve a purpose, but they also drain off effort which might otherwise be directed toward the primary mission of operations. There is evidence that the administrative workload is beginning to unduly erode operational efforts.

Observation: Command emphasis on the necessity to do first things first may help to put useful but secondary functions in their proper perspective.

Item: Manning of aircraft at 90% of current authorization does not permit full use of aircraft resources.

Discussion: The 90% manning level for aviators in Vietnam, when applied at the unit level becomes 75 - 80% on board. Sickness, leave, R&R, and administrative details further reduce the number available for cockpit duty each day. In consequence, this Battalion has mission-ready helicopters available daily which cannot be manned. Further, in order to provide an acceptable

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minimum of support, aviators are frequently flying 8 to 10 hours in a single day and 140 to 160 hours per month. Continued operation at this level runs the distinct danger of unacceptable loss of aviator efficiency and added safety hazards.

Observation: The world-wide shortage of aviators is recognized. Manning level in Vietnam is none the less a major factor limiting unit effectiveness.

Item: Employment of armed helicopters in the Mekong Delta

Discussion: Armed helicopters are probably used more extensively in the Delta than elsewhere in Vietnam. This is because ARVN IV Corps, which has the only maneuver elements here, has much less heavy fire support (artillery and mortars) than our American maneuver elements in the North, therefore relying more on the armed ships. They have proven to be highly effective in a fire support mission against the lightly armed VC. In addition the flat terrain of the Delta is particularly suited for armed helicopter employment in reconnaissance and security roles. In consequence of their extensive use and general effectiveness a substantial increase in armed helicopter strength could be profitably employed in the counter-insurgency effort of the Delta. One fire team could be used very effectively in each of the 15 sectors. The suggested increase would be in addition to units now on hand which are needed to support major ARVN operations.

Observation: A substantial increase in armed helicopters would materially enhance the counter-insurgency effort in the Delta.

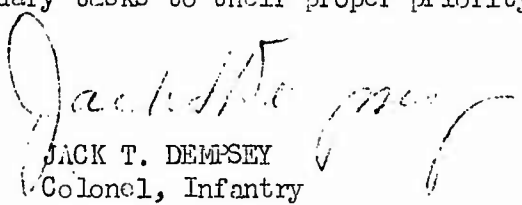
Part II Recommendations:

a. The Aviator replacement program for Vietnam should be accelerated to permit manning units at 100% TOE at the earliest practicable time. Effective manning level of helicopter companies is about 80%.

b. Recommend the procedures for requisitioning of replacements and authorizations for extensions of E7 through E9 enlisted grades be reviewed with the view of eliminating the problem of excess individuals which arises from last minute extensions.

c. Recommend command emphasis be given to focus attention on accomplishment of the primary mission of the counter-insurgency effort and relegation of other useful but secondary tasks to their proper priority.

2 Incl
ANNEX A
ANNEX B


JACK T. DEMPSEY
Colonel, Infantry
Commanding

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ANNEX A To 13th Combat Aviation Battalion ORLL, 15 Nov 1966

OPERATION DAN CHI 261 (21ST ARVN DIVISION) 2-29 SEPTEMBER 1966: This operation conducted by the 21st ARVN Division was fought in six phases during the month of September. Operations began on 2 September with 23 aircraft supporting as staging took place at Soc Trang. A VC "Open Arms" returnee had given the locations of a number of arms caches, which provided the objective for the ground forces. A total of five lifts were flown into three landing zones putting 400 troops on the ground. Light contact was made with the enemy and continued throughout the day. The ARVN troops reported 56 VC killed and seven tons of assorted ammo, 8000 batteries, four USAF 20mm cannons and other weapons captured. The operation continued into the following day when 191 rifles and another five tons of munitions were found. Phase I began on 4 September when a 100 man lift was put into a landing zone six kilometers northwest of Vi Thanh. Early contact with an estimated VC battalion resulted in the recall of all Delta Battalion troop carriers and an additional armed platoon to support the ground elements. Four CV2B aircraft were diverted from scheduled missions to lift the reserve forces into the staging area. A total of ten heliborne ~~assts~~ were flown between 0745 and 1315 hours carrying 1093 troops into the operational area. Armed helicopters provided continuous selective fires in support of the maneuver elements. By nightfall the 21st Division had reported 136 VC killed, 85 VC KBAA and 11 VC captured. Equipment seized included two 60mm mortars, two AA MGs, 59 small arms and one flamethrower. Phase II began on 9 September and was supported by 37 Delta Battalion aircraft again staging at Soc Trang. A new technique was used when the third armed platoon was used to strike the landing zone simultaneously with the landing of the transport aircraft. This afforded an element of surprise that normally does not exist when extensive air preparations are employed. Only light contact was made and a few items of equipment captured in this case. Phase III began on 14 September as the results of ARVN intelligence that reported a VC supply and distribution point in the area around Ca Mau. A total of 1225 troops were lifted into three different LZs in five flights. Light contact was made and the ARVN ground forces reported 8 VC captured, two ten bed hospital found, 3 individual weapons, 5 grenades and 15 kilos of documents captured. Two battalion ships were damaged, one of which lost its tail rotor in the LZ and had to be evacuated. The operation resumed on the 24th of September with the beginning of Phase IV. Delta Battalion supported with 44 aircraft staging at Ca Mau. A total of 1608 troops were moved in four lifts utilizing four different LZs. Moderate contact was made with VC elements and armed helicopters reported 71 VC KBAA (US body count) 21 estimated wounded, and 9 sampans destroyed while providing close supporting fires for the ground troops. By the end of the day ARVN ground forces reported 99 VC killed, 55 VC captured and 225 grenades, 82 rounds of 81mm mortar ammo, 35 kilos of medical supplies, 50 batteries, 9500 rounds of small arms ammo, 300 rounds of machine gun ammo and 10 kilos of documents captured. On 29 September the final phase of Dan Chi 261 took place. The purpose of this operation was to search out and destroy strong combat positions which were being used as bases to attack outposts in Phouc Long and Gia Rin districts. The armed ships provided troop ship escort, aerial fire support and armed reconnaissance, accounting for 10 VC KBAA, 10 VC wounded and one structure and one sampan destroyed. The following is a recapitulation of

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results obtained during the Dan Chi 261 operations:

DAN CHI 261. 2 Sep 66 - 29 Sep 66

| | |
|--------------------------|--------|
| Killed by Army aircraft: | 270 |
| Killed by ground troops: | 344 |
| VC Captured: | 146 |
| Sampans destroyed: | 23 |
| Structures destroyed: | 98 |
| Aircraft used: | 477 |
| Troops carried: | 12,638 |
| Operational days: | 13 |

CAPTURED EQUIPMENT

| | |
|--------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 10,700 rounds of SA ammo | 800 rounds of MG ammo |
| 12 tons assorted ammo | 8050 batteries |
| Four 20mm cannons | Two 60mm mortars |
| One 81mm mortar | 82 rounds of 81mm mortar ammo |
| 57 rounds of 75RR ammo | Five 60mm mortar rounds |
| 7 Carbines | 15 MGs |
| 14 SMGs | 7 ARs |
| One M1 rifle | 2 shotguns |
| 7 Claymore mines | 38 AP mines |
| 394 grenades | 2 German AA MGs |
| 1 pistol | 1 flamethrower |
| 2 FRC 10 radios | 3 telephones |
| 2 walkie talkies | 1 switch board |
| 1 set of binoculars | 1 loudspeaker |
| 1 poncho | 11 kilos of documents |
| 4 sampan motors | 18 gas masks |
| 1 whistle | 50 kilos of medicine |
| 12 pair of jungle boots | 2 packs |

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ANNEX B To 13th Combat Aviation Battalion ORLL, 15 Nov 1966

DAN CHI 263 (SPECIAL OPERATION): This operation originated as a quick reaction to heavy contact made with the U-Minh 10 Battalion by a raiding party which was on a classified mission. Gen. Minh, Commanding General, 21st Division (ARVN) and Col. Hathaway, Senior Advisor were airborne in the C-119 ship over the operational area during the original mission. 21st Division also had a contingent force of three battalions standing by at Vi Thanh, about 10km away, and a fourth battalion in route. After encountering heavy fire from the VC unit, which brought down the Viking Armed Platoon Leader and stopped one element of the raiding party, control of the operation was passed to Commanding General, 21st Division who promptly committed two battalions into an LZ 1500 m southwest of where the gunship went down. By this time two flights of twelve aircraft each had been formed at Vi Thanh. The first flight took off and approached the operational area escorted by the Maverick Armed Platoon, 175th Avn Co; the hastily chosen LZ proved to be an unfortunate choice. It was surrounded on three sides by VC emplacements and automatic weapons which opened up on the first flight and disabled 7 of the 12 aircraft on their way out of the LZ. The second flight of 12 came into the LZ, landed short and was directed east about 1000m to reinforce the ARVN troops already under fire on the ground. As they made a left turn-out, automatic weapons in a tree line opened up. One aircraft went down on the way to Vi Thanh, and 8 of the 12 aircraft were unable to continue because of battle damage. Still, the reinforcement continued. Air strikes pounded the VC positions in the tree-lines and artillery fell along the river. By dusk both battalions had been air landed. ARVN forces were taking heavy casualties and one battalion commander and his deputy were severely wounded and evacuated. After nightfall, the plan was for continuous airstrikes with artillery support and flare illumination from "Spooky". Sporadic fire fights went on into the night. Around midnight the ground fire on both sides subsided, then ceased. Following this, the enemy began a withdrawal to the northwest. The next morning another battalion was put into a LZ near the downed Viking ship. ARVN soldiers of the battalion encountered the crew of the downed helicopter approximately 200 meters from the wrecked aircraft. Having spent the night in hand to hand combat, evading the VC, and taking shelter from friendly air-strikes they were suffering from exposure and promptly evacuated to Soc Trang by Dust-Off. The VC having broken contact and departed the area during the night, the battlefield clean-up began. A troop carrier was slung out of the area by a CH-47 and 8 ships at Vi Thanh were lifted back to their home fields with battle damage. The wrecked gun-ship was inspected by maintenance personnel and declared a total loss. The Battalion Commander ordered it to be destroyed in place. All the ARVN troops were extracted and a plan to airlift a battalion to the northwest to try to head off the withdrawing VC was cancelled. The final results of the battle were 100 VC killed, one U.S. aircraft destroyed and 19 damaged.

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AVBA-C (15 Nov 66) 1st Ind
SUBJECT: Operational Report Lessons Learned for Quarterly Period
Ending 31 October 1966 RCS CSFOR-GS

HEADQUARTERS, 1ST AVIATION BRIGADE, APO 96307

TO: Assistant Chief of Staff, ATTN: ACSFOR, DA, Washington, D.C. 20310

1. (U) The Operational Report-Lessons Learned submitted by the 13th Combat Aviation Battalion for the quarterly period ending 31 October 1966 is forwarded herewith.

2. (C) Pertinent comments are as follows:

a. (U) Reference section 1b: Item: UH-1B/540. This headquarters is aware of the 540 rotor head problems and has implemented all possible corrective action.

b. (U) Reference section 1b: Item: Refueling from prestocked stage fields. The 1st Aviation Brigade S-4 is conducting a study on the entire Vietnam FOL problem.

c. (U) Reference section II Part 1: Item: Granting tour extension during the last three months of tour. USAFV is staffing a new regulation to cover this but it is being held up pending a change to AR 614-30. Until the procedure is provided by USAFV, the unit approving the extension should insure that the requisition is cancelled which was previously submitted based on the EM's DEROS. If it is too late to cancel the requisition, instructions have been disseminated to call directly to the adjutant general this headquarters requesting the arriving enlisted man be diverted.

d. (C) Reference section II part 1: Item: Armed helicopter support.

(1) (C) This changed armament systems only affected installation of the M-5 system. No "A" kits (wiring) or "B" kits (mounts) are available at this time. Wiring and mounts are being removed from all aircraft being returned to CONUS and put into the supply system.

(2) (U) Transfer of the XM-16 system from one aircraft to another takes about ten hours and is accomplished by the unit armament personnel.

(3) (U) Units will only be short two aircraft at any one time for installation of the XM-21 system. This installation takes about four days per aircraft.

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Unclassified after 12 years.
DOD Dir 5200.10

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AVBA-C (15 Nov 66)

1st Ind

SUBJECT: Operational Report Lessons Learned for Quarterly Period
Ending 31 October 1966 RCS CSFOR-GS

HEADQUARTERS, 1ST AVIATION BRIGADE, APO 96307 21 NOV 1966

TO: Assistant Chief of Staff, ATTN: ACSFOR, DA, Washington, D.C. 20310

1. (U) The Operational Report-Lessons Learned submitted by the 13th Combat Aviation Battalion for the quarterly period ending 31 October 1966 is forwarded herewith.

2. (C) Pertinent comments are as follows:

a. (U) Reference section 1b: Item: UH-1B/540. This headquarters is aware of the 540 rotor head problems and has implemented all possible corrective action.

b. (U) Reference section 1b: Item: Refueling from prestocked stage fields. The 1st Aviation Brigade S-4 is conducting a study on the entire Vietnam POL problem.

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